# PITTA

Bulletin of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh

No. 86 : June 1998


## PROGRAMME

**FIELD OUTING: 21-06-1998, 7.30 a.m.: Chilkur Deer Park:** We request members with personal transport, willing to accommodate people, to volunteer to the Hon. Secretary and make the trip a success. We meet inside, near the huts.

**INDOOR MEETING: 15-06-1998, 6 p.m.: "Birds of Zimbabwe," a talk by Humayun Taher.** Vidyaranya High School, Opposite Secretariat, Saifabad, Hyderabad 500004.

## NOTES & NEWS

The **Asian Waterfowl Census** conducted by the members of the BSAP, AP Forest Department and other birdwatchers of the state early this year, was quite a success. A gist of the data is given below. 23 participants (whose forms reached the coordinator) counted a total of 3,32,396 waterfowl at 26 sites, in 8 districts of Andhra Pradesh, representing 59 species.

| BIRD GROUPS | NUMBERS |
|---|---|
| Grebes | 1,435 |
| Pelicans* | 390 |
| Cormorants & Darters | 15,146 |
| Herons & Egrets | 48,451 |
| Storks | 30,945 |
| Ibises & Spoonbills | 4,331 |
| Flamingos | 12,325 |
| Geese & Ducks | 1,86,883 |
| Cranes | — |
| Rails, Gallinules, Coots | 16,397 |
| Finfoots & Jacanas | 808 |
| Shorebirds | 13,115 |
| Gulls & Terns | 2,170 |

* The pelicanry at Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary was not counted this year, hence the number of pelicans is very few. A December 1997 report mentions of 400+ nesting birds present there.

Districts covered in Andhra Pradesh during the AWC 1998

| S. No. | District | No. of Sites |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Cuddapah | 1 |
| 2 | Hyderabad | 1 |
| 3 | Krishna | 2 |
| 4 | Mahbubnagar | 1 |
| 5 | Medak | 2 |
| 6 | Nalgonda | 1 |
| 7 | Nellore | 13 |
| 8 | Rangareddi | 5 |

22 March 1998 was a warm and sunny morning. Mr Qamar Mohammed Khan, DFO Medak, was waiting at the Panjagutta cross-roads. Membes kept trickling in and we finally left at 8.30 a.m. for a day's birding to **Manjira Reservoir** which we reached around 10 a.m. A quick cup of tea and we all trooped to the back of the Environment Centre to see the feeding of crocodiles. It was fascinating to watch the seemingly quiet and docile creatures suddenly erupt into action the moment they saw the keeper bringing in the bucket of meat. After the thrill and some photography, we went towards the lower barrage to go to the temporary boat jetty. The original jetty was dry all round as there was little water in the reservoir and we could not walk along the barrage as there were two huge bee-hives above the gates! Despite all the care and detour, it was slippery on the mossy stones and we were all fortunate to get to the other side except for Moorty and Walter, who slipped but got up smiling! Looking down the river (stream would be more appropriate!) we spotted 12 Brahminy Duck and a couple of Spotbills. The usual Pond Herons, Cattle and Little Egrets were also there and a few Pariah Kites circled above. While a Pied Kingfisher was hovering above for its breakfast of "fish-n-fish", two Little Cormorants were sunning on the rocks. Somebody spotted a Large Cormorant on a projection over the barrage gate and there were 2 Bluetailed Bee-Eaters, probably feasting on the occupants of the hives. Swallows weren't far behind and 2 species, Common and Wiretailed, were seen flying around along with Dusky Crag Martins, in a separate flock. By now the boatman, Mallesh, was ready with the boat, life-jackets and all, and very soon the boat was full of excited members looking forward to an enjoyable boat ride. There was excitement all around when they returned (no problems with the boat though) - for the birds sighted. Openbill and Painted Storks an also the Whitenecked. While one was delighted having seen the White Ibis, another was excited about having seen the Purple Moorhen, the Purple Heron and the Grey Heron. This geared up the next group and they piled into the boat. They returned after an hour, no less ecstatic. Someone spotted a nightjar on a branch but the species could not be determined. Night Herons in fair numbers and a lot of abandoned Baya nests were seen. So was a Cotton Teal. Meanwhile, Qamar Mohammed, another person and I were sitting on the bund, under a shade, and were rewarded with the sighting of a Brahminy Kite, an Osprey, a lone Demoiselle Crane and 2 Kestrels. To twist a famous poetic line, 'they also serve, who sit and watch'. It was getting rather hot as we returned to the Environmental Cen-

tre. A wash, lunch and then a film on Manjira (Telugu commentary). When notes were compared, the tally of species stood at 52. Next day we read that the mercury stood at 42°C on that wonderful Sunday! - Siraj A Taher.

A letter from Taej Mundkur, Coordinator, Waterbird Conservation Programme of Wetlands International (based at Malaysia), brings some mixed news. The good news first! "I am pleased to inform you that the **Asian Waterfowl Census 1994-96 report** is finally printed.... The report will be mailed out directly from the printers in Bangalore, India, to coordinators and participants of the 1994, 1995 and 1996 census within the next week or so." So, all those of you who have taken part in this census, will finally receive the long awaited report! The bad news is, "Compared to other parts of the world, Asia is quoted as having the highest percentage (%) of decreasing populations, lowest % of stable populations and the lowest % of populations with known trends (along with Oceania). This should be an incentive for all of us to work together to improve the information on the conservation status of these birds."

"The **Wildlife Institute of India** has begun a project concerning the ecology of the **Sarus Cranes**. It will look into the aspect of land use change within the range of the species and determine if this has had any effects on the behaviour and ecology of the Cranes. This is especially pertinent since several surveys indicate that the population of this majestic bird has plummeted to very low numbers in the past years. In this matter, we would appreciate your help. We are compiling a data base of all sightings of the Sarus Crane since 1995 from anyone who has done any birdwatching and noted down the presence of the species. The data will be of immense use and we would like to have the location of sighting, site description, number of birds sighted and any other information that will be of use in the project. The information will be duly acknowledged in all reports and publications." Questionnaires are available with B C Choudhury, Scientist, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box # 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248001.

"The famous expert on Sri Lankan avifauna," Layard, "described the first specimen of the flycatcher (now popularly called **Layard's flycatcher** ***Muscicapa muttui***) in 1854 in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* series 2, 13(74): 127. After the usual scientific account on the bird, Layard writes: "I name this new species after my old and attached servant Muttu, to whose patient perseverance and hunting skill I owe so many of my best birds. This one he brought in one morning at Pt. Pedro in the month of June..." This article was from a series of papers Layard authored in the aforementioned journal in 1853-54 entitled *Notes on the Ornithology of Ceylon, collected during an eight years' residence in the island.* [R Kannan in *Hornbill* 1996, No. 2: 9.]

That wild birds can be as fearless of humans, as is described below, seems impossible. But it is true on some islands of the **Galapagos** archipelago.

"The finches are much more afraid of hawks and owls than they are of us," **Peter Grant** tells friends in Princeton. "When we walk up to them, the birds keep doing what they are doing; but when an owl comes near, they head for a cactus tree. A little while ago Rosemary was crossing a treeless spot. An owl flew over, and finches flew up from all around and landed on Rosemary!

"They are always perching on our shoulders, our arms, our heads. Sometimes when I am measuring one, a few others land up and down my wrists and arms to watch. I was looking out to sea with binoculars once, and a hawk handed on my hat. We have a picture of it."

"Or you pick up a bamboo pole, set it over your shoulder, and begin to carry it," says Rosemary. "Suddenly the pole is very heavy. Then you turn around and see that you have a hawk hitching a ride on the back of it."

"I used to have a wart on my back, although it is gone now," says Peter. "A small black wart, up near the right shoulder. I went around in just shorts in those days, and on Genovesa (one of the islands), finches would peck at the wart."

"What a difference!" says one veteran of the finch watch, Dolph Schluter. "In Kenya, finches flush as much as 30 meters away. In the Galapagos, the birds land on the rim of your coffee cup. If there's only a little coffee left in there, they will land right inside it and take a sip. You can put your hand over it, and measure the bird. Mockingbirds on Genovesa would pick at our shoelaces. On the really isolated islands like Wolf, you could catch the birds by hand. Just reach out your hand and grab them."

Peter, camping in Shiraz, had once spotted a pair of nuthatches feeding near a rock. He put a few nuts on the rock, and hid himself, hoping to observe the birds' beaks and feeding behavior at close range. Although he waited three hours, the birds did not come back. ("It would be better to use caged birds, " Peter noted tersely in his report.) But on Daphne the most famous beaks in the world were tapping him on the shoulder. He had **Darwin**'s finches perching on his knee, studying him. [Weiner, Jonathan (1995): The Beak of the Finch: Evolution in Real Time. Vintage.]

"A suggestion of interest to foresters has been made that a greater variety of trees in the **plantations** would provide additional food in winter for those birds best able to control or at least stabilise insect populations. Tits in winter take an appreciable proportion of the invertebrate population and one can calculate that each bird examines 1,100 trees every day and needs 5 mg. or the equivalent of 24 average-sized insects every minute of the day to keep itself alive. Coal and willow tits store food in autumn, but this forms only a very small part of their diet. In mid-winter coal tits have to feed for about 90% of a nine-hour day. On the principle that the smaller the species the longer the time required each day for feeding, goldcrests must feed for nearly 100% of the time.....

"These areas (orchards) represent an important ecotone for birds, but their importance will be affected by whether the orchards have herbage only beneath the trees, or fruit bushes or ploughed land, as well as by the age and treatment of the fruit trees. Orchards are sometimes turned into unstable communities by man's interference with the ecological balance. Although it may be tempting to overestimate the value of birds in controlling pests, a serious break in the ecological chain at the lower levels may render the trees more liable to attack by insect pests. Invasions most often come to cultivated land or to land greatly modified by man's multifarious practices. **Orchards** are therefore extremely valuable for ecological studies since man's economic needs are also involved." [Simms, Eric (1990): Woodland Birds. Bloomsbury Books, London.]

A recent study [Malik, Y.P. (1998): Birds: An eco-friendly approach for insect-pests management in Linseed. *Insect Environment* 3(4): 104.] brings to light some positive aspects of **economic ornithology**. "Linseed *Linum usitatissimum* L. has a number of insect-pests among which Cutworm *Agrotis ipsilon* Hfn., at the seedling stage and gram pod borer *Helicoverpa armigera* Hubn., at capsule formation, cause economic losses. A cutworm damage of nearly 20% was reduced to 5-7% due to the predation on the larval stage by the **Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*. At the time of irrigation, the larvae of cutworm hidden under the clods float on water surface, which are picked-up by the predatory bird. The **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* preys on the larvae of gram pod borer and reduced the capsule damage from about 10% to 3-5%. Wooden/bamboo pegs used as perch may increase the feeding propensity of the drongo.

**Memberships** which expired on 31-3-1998 should be renewed at the rates given below. The status of your membership is indicated on the address label of your envelope. An early renewal will help the Society. Membership in Rs: Life 1,000; Ordinary 100 p.a.; Student 25 p.a.; Corporate 2,000 (20 years); Foreign $ 15 p.a.; Student membership only up to 10th class. Payment should favour "Bird-watchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh" and should be sent to the address at the end of this Bulletin.

## LETTER FROM AN INSECT-HUNTING ORNITHOLOGIST—16

"A bird is different from an aeroplane, although both fly through the air."(p. 9)
".... if our brains were to work like traditional computers it would take us about two days to get dressed, a week to make breakfast and a week to get to work." (p. 12)
"The mind can see only what it is prepared to see." (p. 17)
".... 'intelligence' [which is gene-based—K.G.] is the potential of the mind and the way this is put into operation is thinking skill." (p. 16)
"The relationship between intelligence and thinking is similar to that between a car and the driver."(p. 19)
"We need to shift from cleverness to wisdom. Perception is the basis of wisdom." (p. 27)
"Aristotle said that all new knowledge comes from existing knowledge." (p. 181)
"I looked out across the valley at the beginning of the Alps. I noticed a hawk circling overhead. For twenty minutes the hawk glided without once flapping its wings. The hawk knew the system perfectly and moved from on thermal up-draught to another. Human para-gliders descended to the valley floor in just two minutes. Knowing the system makes a difference." (p. 51) (Edward de Bono, 1990, *I Am Right—You Are Wrong*. From this to the New Renaissance: From Rock Logic to Water Logic. xx+293 pp., Penguin Books, Delhi)

Five hundred years ago, this very month, a Portuguese voyager Vasco da Gamma ( see Letter 9, *Pitta* # 77, Sept. 1997) sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and 'discovered' India for the Europeans. I believe this initiated a kind of Renaissance—the re-birth of learning—in our sub-continent, when paper making (which the Chinese taught the Arabs and they the Europeans) and printing introduced by Europeans revolutionized our life-style and our thinking. This Letter is an unstinted *encomium* of this great navigator, discoverer, and of his landing at Calicut (*Kozhikode* in native tongue) in May 1498, and what followed from Europe as a 'fall out' of this achievement.

On October 7, 1967 a dear school-mate of mine, who was one of my early companions on 'bird walks', presented me with a book I treasure to this day. This was James Fisher's *A History of Birds* (1954, Hutchinson's University Library, London, 208 pp.), one of the many 'Fisherian' literary masterpieces that conditioned my ornithological upbringing in the days of The Beatles, of a richer, more tasteful, Hindostani Cinema and of my heroes playing Test Cricket. Fisher wrote that "the first printed book on animals was published before 20th July, 1467 in Strasburg (an edition of the *Sermonum Proprietate* of Rabanus Maurus)", and went on to elaborate that "If example be needed of the impact of the Age of Print and Science upon the world, the transformation of the list of recorded British birds in the sixteenth century is a good one, for it was nearly doubled, rising, as I have it in my collection of names, from eighty to 138 [some 450 species have now been recorded from Great Britain and Ireland—K.G.]. More than half the fifty-eight 'new' birds were contributed by William Turner [1500-1568], the father of British ornithology, whose *Avium Praecipuarum* was published in Cologne in 1544, the first printed bird book...." Another Fisherian masterpiece, in collaboration with the painting skill of Roger Tory Peterson, that I acquired in the 1960s, was their magnificent *The World of Birds*: A comprehensive guide to general ornithology (1964, Macdonald & Co., London, 288 pp.).

The philosophical quotations above are taken from a book I found lying around in my Desktop Printer's office, on a day I had to wait my turn at their computers. The opportunity that availed itself was seized and I spent much of the next hour speed-reading and making notes from this very interesting book by Edward de Bono. He feels the time is now right for a 'New Renaissance', which will lift us from a rigid 'Rock Logic' to a free flowing 'Water Logic'. He writes that the last renaissance was clearly based on the rediscovery of ancient Greek thinking habits (about 400 BC) of logic, reason, argument, truth and the importance of man. Before this, our thinking was based on dogma and theology. Feudalism, the shameless exploitation of the peasantry, was getting out of date, and the renaissance brought in a reformation which was a revolt against the Roman Church. It also triggered a revolution, a political struggle of the *bourgeoisie* ('middle class') to control the power of the kings who ruled them. De Bono thinks that a new renaissance will supplant the 24 centuries-old logic of reason with the intelligence of perception. I also believe we are now ready for just such a new renaissance, to be ushered in with perception and wisdom, taking utmost care to *select* only what we really need and can absorb and digest, and rejecting most of the 'hi-tech, hi-life' carrots that the developed 'West' is dangling before us. We developing countries (mostly tropical) cannot afford their urban lifestyle; their fighting the cold there with excessive burning of fuel, gas, electrical and atomic energy.

Readers may wonder what I am doing with a letter meant for bird watchers. Let me explain. Like there is no Science without Philosophy (a Ph.D. is a degree in Philosophy!), there really can be no effective bird watching by itself without awareness of history (natural and human), geography, art, culture, *etc*. We are now in a Information Age but, no computer can ever match the human brain (or even 'animal instinct'). We must be careful (1) not to get bamboozled by this overflow of available data on CD-Roms or Internet Websites and (2) in learning quickly the means to *select* and summarize the 'grain from the chaff' of this information explosion.

Coming back to Calicut and the hopeful renaissance of ornithological research in South Asia, two scientists at the National Research Centre for Spices (for whose trade Europeans came to India; though the real 'Spice Islands" are the Moluccas of present Indonesia) have written on bird-flowers noticed in this historical coastal city and at Peruvannamuzhi in the Wynaad. Devasahayam & Rema (1994, *NLBW* 33: 103-105) wrote of 16 plant species whose flowers were visited by birds in Kerala, of which 5 species were additions to the 93 flowering plants listed by Subramanya & Radhamani, visited by 58 bird species (These numbers do not even cover 1% of our plant species and just over 4% of our bird species!). They also observed a maximum of bird visitors on flowers of *Bombax ceiba* Linnaeus (Bombacaceae) and on *Erythrina variegata* L. var. *orientalis* Merrill (Fabaceae), but I have not seen the publications in which these have been "reported elsewhere". Another scientist, a lady, has also researched on nectar-feeding birds and avian pollinators of parasitic mistletoes (lLoranthaceae) (see Priya Davidar, 1985, *J.B.N.H.S.* 82: 45-60). P. Kannan submitted a M.Sc. thesis on Ornithophily to the University of Bombay in 1966, dealing with flowerbirds around Bombay, but I am not aware of this paper being published, though one on "Nectar-feeding adaptations of Flowerbirds" appeared in the *J.B.N.H.S.* (75: 1036-1050) in 1980. The BIBLIOGRAPHIC INDEX (1995) compiled by Aasheesh Pittie is unfortunately of little help, as I had pointed out (1996, *NLBW* 36: 74-77), in obtaining most published works on subjects like Pollination by birds, or Food of birds, which latter will be the topic of a forthcoming Letter.

— Dr. Kumar Ghorpadé

[Errata in Letter # 15 – Line 9 from bottom of p. 2 should read "There is no doubt that Berlin", and Line 3 of last paragraph should read "coffee+cardamom—planted wooded area".]

## BIRDING NOTES *Compiled by Aasheesh Pittie*

This column publishes birding notes in brief telegraphic form, from **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra & Tamil Nadu** on interesting and significant sightings and behaviour like breeding, feeding, migration, nesting, etc. Notes on flowering and fruiting trees and their relationship with birds are also welcome. English names and classification follow, S.D. Ripley's *A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan* (1982, 2nd ed.) and scientific nomenclature, T. Inskipp, N. Lindsey & W. Duckworth's *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Oriental Region* (1996). Unless specified, all observations are for 1998. Abbreviations, Contributors, Notes, Regional Referees, etc., are at the end.

## ANDHRA PRADESH

### CHITTOOR DISTRICT

**Rishi Valley** (SR) 11.3

LITTLE EGRET POB, 3 in br., plm; COLLARED SCOPS OWL 1; MOTTLED WOOD OWL 1; GREY DRONGO 2; PARADISE FLYCATCHER 1 F; WHITETHROATED GROUND THRUSH 1; LARGE PIED WAGTAIL CB, 2 ad., 2 yng.

### HYDERABAD DISTRICT

**Banjara Hills**

SPOTTED DOVE 9.5: CB, N with 3 eggs in bougainvillea, 1 laid on consequtive days. 11.5: N destroyed by strong wind. 13.5 PRB, pair const., N in same place (SAT); PLAINTIVE CUCKOO 25.4: 1 F, hepatic phase. Hawking insects like flycatchers, from top of tree (AP); BLACKNAPED BLUE FLYCATCHER 22.4: 1 F hunting inside canopy of fruiting mango tree (AP).

**Hyderabad City** (HJ)

SHIKRA 2.3: Sunning on ground.; REDHEADED MERLIN 6.5: 1 at Imliban Bus Stand (Central bus stand).

## KARNATAKA

### BANGALORE DISTRICT

**Bangalore City**

BRAHMINY KITE 29.4: 1 imm., N destroyed by heavy rain on 25.4, United Theological College (JNP); SCAVENGER VULTURE 12.2: 2, St. Joseph's College (JNP); SMALL GREEN BARBET 29.4: POB, United Theological College (DJ); INDIAN MYNA 29.4: POB, 1 N (JNP); JUNGLE MYNA 29.4: POB, 4 N (JNP); BLACK HEADED CUCKOO SHRIKE 29.4: United Theological College (JNP); MAGPIE ROBIN 9.5: CB, N in N-box, Sadashivnagar (FS); GREY TIT 21.4.2 inspecting N-box (JNP).

**Kadugodi/Whitefield Area** (KVS)

PARIAH KITE 17.4: CB, N with 1 nestling; REDWATTLED LAPWING 14.4: CB, N with 4 eggs, incubating; SPOTTED OWLET 30.4; WHITEBREASTED KINGFISHER 29.4: CB, ad., feeding nestlings; ROLLER 16.4: CB, ad., feeding nestlings; HOOPOE 17.4: CB, ad., feeding 2 yng., outside N; CRIMSONBREASTED BARBET 17.4: CB, incubating; SMALL GREEN BARBET 16.4: CB, ad., feeding nestlings; SINGING BUSH LARK 20.4: CB, N with 4 nestlings fed by ad.; WIRETAILED SWALLOW 26.4: CB; N const.; REDRUMPED SWALLOW 20.4: PRB, N const.; BLACK DRONGO 18.4: CB, incubating; INDIAN MYNA 18.4: N bldg; JUNGLE MYNA 18.4: N bldg; TREE PIE 17.4: CB, incubating; JUNGLE CROW 26.4: CB, incubating; WHITEBROWED BULBUL 18.4: CB, N with 1 egg & 1 nestling. Ad., feeding yng; INDIAN ROBIN 22.4 CB, N with 1 nestling & 2 eggs, ad., incubating; PADDYFIELD PIPIT 26.4: CB, 1 N with 2 eggs, ad., incubating; LARGE PIED WAGTAIL 26.4: CB, ad., feeding yng; HOUSE SPARROW 15.4: POB, incubating; WHITETHROAT-ED MUNIA 14.4 CB, N with 7 eggs, incubating.

**Indiranagar** (VK)

HOOPOE 5.4: (becoming very rare in Bangalore) National Institute of Advanced Studies; SMALL GREEN BARBET 16.4: CB, ad., feeding fledgling with Singapore Cherry.

**Sadashivnagar** (AmP)

NIGHT HERON 1.5: CB, 15 with imm., at heronry nearer Sankey Tank. Many const., N.; PIED CRESTED CUCKOO 1 golf course.

**Vasanthnagar** (RK,JH,C,JNP)

Magpie Robin 26.4: POB, M Singing & frequently visiting a chimney pipe.

**Badamanavarthe State Forest/Valley School** 10.5

BLACKHEADED CUCKOO-SHRIKE tail moulting (JNP); BLACK DRONGO PRB, ad., carrying N-matl (MRR); PURPLE SUNBIRD CB, F feeding 2 yng in N in Eresid spiders colony *c.* 3' from ground (JG)

### KOLAR DISTRICT

LESSER PIED KINGFISHER 3.4 11 on a wire (VK).

### MANDYA DISTRICT 29.3 (PCG, DK)

**Kokrebellur Bird Sanctuary**

GREY PELICAN 13 orphaned/injured nestlings saved at Kokrebellur pelican pen by volunteers of Hejjarle Balaga (Pelican Conservation Group).

**ABBREVIATIONS:** Ab-abundant; ad-adult/s; br-breeding; C-common/ly; CB-confirmed breeding; const-construction/ing; *c.*-approximately; disp-display/ing; F-female; flt-flight; fly-family; freq-frequent/ly; hrd-heard; id-identify/ied; imm-immature; inc-include/ing; Is-Island; juv-juvenile; LM-local migrant; M-male; mat-material; N-nest/ing/s; POB-possible breeding; PRB-probable breeding; plm-plumage; RF-Reserve Forest; Tlk-Taluk; vil-village; WL-wildlife; yng-young.

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**REGIONAL REFEREES:** Andhra Pradesh: A Pittie; Karnataka: JN Prasad; Kerala: PO Nameer; Maharashtra: N Jamdar; Tamil Nadu: V Santharam.

## OBITUARY

**Dr. Charles G. Sibley**: Born 7 August 1917, Fresno, California, died 12 April 1998, Santa Rosa, California. During his lifetime, Dr. Sibley held many eminent teaching and administrative posts in famous American universities and bird-related organizations. Among these are the Universities of California, Kansas, Yale, Cornell and San Francisco. He was a member of ca. 15 scientific societies, U.S. and foreign; Fellow, Honorary or Corresponding Fellow of Seven; officer or council member of five - 1946-present. He was a Guggenheim Fellow, 1959-60; Treasurer, American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), 1953-62; President, AOU, 1986-88; Secretary-General of the 13th International Ornithological Congress (IOC), 1958-62 and President of the 20th IOC, 1986-1990. Besides this he was on the editorial boards of many technical journals. His publications since 1939 include 132 titles, of which 77 pertain to molecular systematics and evolution. But his most lasting and important contribution to the ornithological world were the three books he co-authored, dealing with the DNA-based classification of birds.

"Phylogeny and Classification of Birds" (with Jon Ahlquist). Yale Univ. Press. 1990.
"Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World" (with Burt Monroe). Yale Univ. Press. 1990.
"A World Checklist of Birds" (with Burt Monroe). Yale Univ. Press. 1993.

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***For more information write to:*** Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills PO, Hyderabad 500034. India.
**Errata:** The note on BSAP's Anantagiri trip (*Pitta* # 85, May 1998, p. 1) was written by Hashim Tyabji.
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